

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated March 31, 2003, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on June 30, 2003. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 9-20, 25-27, 29 and 39 are now pending in the application. Claims 9-13, 15, 16, 18-20, 25-27, 29 and 39 have been rejected. Claims 14 and 17 were objected to.

Claims 11, 25-27, 29 and 39 have been cancelled, as shown above. Claims 10 and 17-19 have been amended.

Concerning Claim 10.

The Examiner has rejected independent claim 10. Claim 10 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 11 as well as certain limitations of claim 14. Inasmuch as the Examiner previously advised that claim 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, Application respectfully submits that claim 10 is now in condition for allowance.

Concerning Claims that Depend From Claim 10.

Claims 11-20 depend, directly or indirectly, from Claim 10. The Examiner has rejected dependent claims 11-13, 15-16 and 18-20. Claims 14 and 17 have been objected to; however, the Examiner has advised that claims 14 and 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As noted, Applicant has cancelled claim 11, and has incorporated the limitations of claim 11 into independent claim 10. In addition, certain limitations of claim 14 have

been incorporated into claim 10. Claim 14 depends from claim 12, which in turn depends from amended claim 10. Claim 17 depends directly from amended claim 10. Claim 17 has also been amended to make it more readable. Applicant respectfully submits that because claim 10 is in condition for allowance, amended claims 14 and 17 are also allowable.

Claims 12, 18 and 19 have been amended to change dependency. In this respect, claims 12, 18 and 19 now depend from claim 10 rather than now-cancelled claim 11. Claims 13, 15-16 and 20 have not been amended, but depend indirectly from independent claim 10. Applicant respectfully submits that because claim 10 is in condition for allowance, claims 12-13, 15-16 and 18-20 are also allowable.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, the references cited by the Examiner, neither alone nor in combination, teach, show, or suggest the method or apparatus of the present invention as now provided in claim 10 and claims depending therefrom. Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 10 and 12-20 are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,



B. Todd Patterson
Registration No. 37,906
Peter L. Brewer
Registration No. 41,636
MOSER, PATTERSON & SHERIDAN, L.L.P.
3040 Post Oak Blvd., Suite 1500
Houston, TX 77056
Telephone: (713) 623-4844
Facsimile: (713) 623-4846